

Claim 4(amended). The system of claim [Cl.] 1, wherein the energy absorption device dissipates most of the kinetic energy of the struck ball.

Claim 5(amended). The system of claim [Cl.] 1, wherein the line is capable of stretching when the ball is struck, providing energy to return the ball to the vicinity of striking [sticking].

Claim 6 (New Claim). The system of claim 5, wherein the line is of polyethylene material.

Claim 7(New Claim). The system of claim 2, which includes a loop of the line in cooperation with the scale so that a reduction in the length of the loop compared to the scale provides an indication of the distance the ball would travel if struck in an unrestrained environment.

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider his rejection of all of the original claims based on the Russell 5056790 reference in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

Russell specifically shows its line directly fixed to a movable piston 27, which is part of its energy absorbing system, and not to its support. Applicant's device shows and claims that the line is connected to a fixed support at 42. In applicants claimed device the line is wound around an energy-absorbing device positioned between the ball and the fixed support connection. Russell therefore creates a line connection where very high initial tensile force is applied directly to the line connection, which creates an undesirable situation. The forces on such a direct connection would be extremely high and would likely result in a system that could not survive many repetitive strokes, especially since the Russell line is not elastic.

Russell also utilizes a complex piston and fluid damper system unlike the simple and reliable system now claimed by Applicant. The use of Applicants claimed energy-absorbing system, including its line wrapped around cylinders, is significantly different in structure and operation from Russell's complicated system. The frictional movement of Applicants line around a non-rotating cylinder effectively and efficiently dissipates the kinetic energy through the heat generated by such movement.

Applicant requests Examiner to also reconsider the observations, implied in the Office Action, of the structure of Russell as compared with the claimed structure of Applicants invention in claims 2-5 in view of the above clarification of the two considerably different structures. Applicant specifically points out that Russell requires 2 discrete lines to accomplish the function of Applicants single line. Applicant utilizes its single stretchable line to contribute to the energy dissipation in the system as well as to conveniently return the ball to the vicinity of the striking.

New claims 6 and 7 add more specific structure clearly not shown nor suggested by Russell.

Applicant has made the minor technical amendments to claims 2-5 as requested by the Examiner e.g. replace reference to “Cl” with the term “claim” as well as adding “periods” to the end of claims 4 and 5.

In view of the above amendments and comments, Applicant requests an early Notice of Allowance of claims 1-7 as amended.

Respectfully submitted



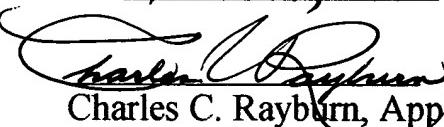
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on September 9, 2005



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Date of Signature
